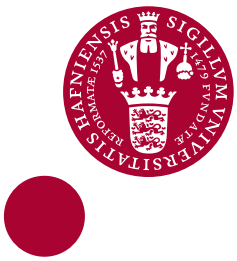

Party rules, party resources and the politics of parliamentary democracies

How parties organize in the 21st century

Poguntke, Thomas; Scarrow, Susan; Webb, Paul; Allern, Elin H; Aylott, Nicholas; Biezen, Ingrid van; Calossi, Enrico; Costa Lobo, Marina ; Cross, William P; Deschouwer, Kris; Enyedi, Zsolt; Fabre, Elodie; Farrell, David M; Gauja, Anika; Pizzimenti, Eugenio ; Kopecky , Petr; Koole, Ruud; Kosiara-Pedersen, Karina; Müller, Wolfgang C; Rahat, Gideon; Szczerbiak, Aleks ; van Haute, Emilie; Verge, Tania

Published in:
Party Politics

DOI:
10.1177/1354068816662493

Publication date:
2016

Document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Article

Party Politics

Party rules, party resources and the politics of parliamentary democracies: How parties organize in the 21st century

Party Politics
1–18

DOI: 10.1177/1354068816662493
ppq.sagepub.com
SAGE

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Abstract
This article introduces the first findings of the Political Party Database Project, a major survey of party organizations in parliamentary and semi-presidential democracies. The project's first round of data covers 122 parties in 19 countries. In this article, we describe the scope of the database, then investigate what it tells us about contemporary party organization in these countries, focusing on parties' resources, structures and internal decision-making. We examine organizational patterns by country and party family, and where possible we make temporal comparisons with older data sets. Our analyses suggest a remarkable coexistence of uniformity and diversity. In terms of the major organizational resources on which parties can draw, such as members, staff and finance, the new evidence largely confirms the continuation of trends identified in previous research: that is, declining membership, but enhanced financial resources and more paid staff. We also find remarkable uniformity regarding the core architecture of party organizations. At the same time, however, we find substantial variation between countries and party families in terms of their internal processes, with particular regard to how internally democratic they are, and the forms that this democratization takes.

Keywords
intra-party democracy, party finance, party membership, party organization, party strength

Introduction

How do parties organize, and how much do parties' organizational differences matter? The aim of the Political Party Database (PPDB) Project is to provide systematic answers to the first question so that we can better answer the second one, the crucial 'so what?' question about party organizational variations. Other questions we investigate are to what extent, and why, do parties retain certain structural features despite changes in their competitive environments? For instance, are some traditional organizational features outmoded, such as party conferences and party membership? If so, these could be nothing more than quaint relics, or they could be contributing to something other than their nominal purpose. To use Bagehot's terminology (1963 [1867]), it is

Paper submitted 2 February 2016; accepted for publication 13 July 2016

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possible that parties' extra-parliamentary organizations have become the 'dignified' elements of party constitutions, with the real work of party politics being done by the 'efficient' parts of the organization, be these the professionalized party staffs or the party office holders. Bagehot wrote that the dignified elements were theatrical and often old elements which helped 'to excite and preserve the reverence of the population' (p. 61); similarly, some party practices might be remnants of earlier conditions, but which nevertheless still contribute to the legitimacy of party government.

Generating legitimacy is not a small thing, as Bagehot himself noted, so if organizations play that role, this is important, but we would still want to know whether parties retain these institutions because they continue to contribute in other ways. We do not expect to find simple or universal answers to any of these questions, but we do expect to gain traction in answering them using systematic data to test posited relationships. This conviction has inspired the establishment of the PPDB. In the remainder of this article we introduce this database and present some of our initial findings regarding the state of contemporary party organizations in 19 democracies.

The long tradition of comparative party scholarship: Concepts, categories and data

The comparative study of political parties' extra-legislative organizations and activities is more than 150 years old, having arisen alongside the emergence of electoral politics. In the middle third of the 20th century, the comparative study of political parties was stimulated and redefined by authors who ambitiously constructed new categories and new causal theories to explain organizational differences between political parties in multiple democracies, and to explain changes over time (including Duverger, 1954; Kirchheimer, 1966; Neumann, 1954, and many more). More recent contributors continued to develop this approach (cf. Panebianco, 1988; von Beyme, 1985; Ware, 1987). A common feature of these multi-country studies is their reliance on thick description to buttress their arguments. Some of their most enduring contributions are now-familiar labels (e.g. mass, catch-all, electoral professional, etc.). Much of the theoretical speculation in these classic studies treats parties and party organizations as dependent variables, explaining how contemporary parties bear the marks of their origins, and how organizational differences reflect institutional contexts and ideological (party family) similarities.

Echoing general trends in political science, recent decades have witnessed the rise of more systematic and more quantitative studies of political parties' organizations and activities outside the legislative arena. Much of this research relies on party statutes and documents for evidence about party structures, sometimes combined with expert judgments about how parties actually work. One notable investigation that combined both approaches was Kenneth Janda's pioneering study of party organization and practices in 53 countries (1980). Janda and his colleague Robert Harmel later proposed a different framework for collecting and interpreting data about party organizational change, one aimed squarely at understanding practices in democratic regimes (1994). The 1980s also brought the start of another ambitious effort to gather cross-party and longitudinal data on party organizational development, which became the 12-country *Party Organizations: A Data Handbook on Party Organizations in Western Democracies, 1960-90* (Katz and Mair, 1992). This effort focused on what the editors dubbed the 'official story' approach, primarily reporting published data and formal rules.

Introducing the PPDB

The PPDB project falls squarely within this tradition of evidence-driven approaches to the comparative study of political parties.[1] It deliberately builds on and extends past efforts, while aiming to complement, not duplicate, other contemporary efforts to gather data on elections and representation. Thus, in some cases it replicates questions that have been used in earlier studies, making it easier to use some of PPDB's snapshot data for longitudinal comparisons.

In forming what was essentially a data-gathering collaborative endeavour, members of this project agreed to pool their efforts and standardize variables in order to maximize the utility of our individual data gathering efforts. In building our initial team, we deliberately sought out members with varied theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of political parties. This diversity is reflected in the data that we chose to gather. (A full list of those involved in this data collection effort is included in Appendix 1.)

We decided early on to focus on the official story, in order to facilitate future replication; this decision also constrained our choice of variables.[2] We also prioritized gathering data that would be useful for studying parties and their resources as independent variables – in other words, that would help us answer the questions of why and how organizational variations matter.

The PPDB Round 1 data provides information on 122 parties in 19 countries[3] during the 2010–2014 period. These parties include most or all of the parties represented in the lower houses of their respective national parliaments at that time, with the exception of France, for which we have information on only the two parties with the largest number of legislative seats. The database includes over 300 variables that collectively describe some of the most important aspects of party structures and practices. For some parties and some variables we have readings for more than 1 year; for most, however, we have just one data point. We have deliberately included most countries included in the Katz/Mair *Data Handbook* to maximize the value of the data. To these we have added (mostly) parliamentary regimes that differ from the original in many theoretically relevant ways. For instance, they have different electoral

systems, different electoral thresholds, use both federal and unitary structures, have varied lengths of democratic experience, varied population sizes and disparate levels of state funding for political parties. In short, this data set offers multiple opportunities to test questions about how institutional settings can affect the ways that parties organize, and about when and how this matters.

The conceptual roadmap that guided our choice of indicators was the view that party organizations can usefully be described in terms of their structures, their resources and their representative strategies. We further subdivided each of these dimensions with the aim of answering specific questions. For instance, a recurring question for scholars is the extent to which parties should be viewed as unitary actors. In order to better answer this question, we incorporated indicators derived from four structural sub-dimensions which illuminate the formal location of decision-making within the party, and at what level (if at all) these decisions are enforced (leadership autonomy, centralization, coordination and territorial dispersion). Similarly, we subdivided the resource dimension into various categories of resource (including money, members and staff) in order to better identify dependency relationships and resource control. Table 1 shows some of the areas covered, and the specific variables we use to measure them. In a nutshell, we have collected data on party membership, party staff, party finance, basic party units, party executive composition, formal links to collateral organizations, women's representation, leadership selection, candidate selection, manifesto construction and approval and intra-party referendums. Our conceptual foundation helped to ensure that we have gathered sufficient data to test the predictions of the many theories of party organizational change, including those which posit links between parties' internal power dynamics and their resource bases.

Table 1. Organizational dimensions and sample variables.

Dimensions	Sample variables
Structures	
Leadership autonomy-restriction	Rules for leadership selection and re-selection. Rules for policy-making. Staff resources of individual legislators and leaders.
Centralization-localization	Rules for candidate selection. Distribution of financial resources across levels.
Coordination-entropy	Formal recognition of factions. Representation of regional parties in national party executive. Representation of legislative party in national party executive. Openness to candidates who are not party members.
Territorial concentration-dispersion	Number of basic organizational units. Self-identification as regional party.
Resources	
Financial strength-weakness	Party revenue. Party campaign spending
Resource diversification-concentration	Proportion of party funding from public, party and private sources.
State autonomy-dependence	Proportion of party funding from public sources.
Bureaucratic strength-weakness	Number of professional staff in extra-parliamentary organization and for parliamentary party.
Volunteer strength-weakness	Membership numbers. Use of web page to mobilize volunteer help.
Representative strategies	
Individual linkage: integrated identity – consumer choice	Membership rules (dues rates, probationary periods, ease of joining). Roles for individuals (members or non-members) in party decisions.
Group linkage: non-party group ownership – autonomy	Statutory roles for group or sub-group representatives at party conferences and on party executive. Actual representation of sub-group members in party executive.

Extra-parliamentary parties in contemporary democracies: Structural similarities, resource differences?

Taken as a whole, the PPDB provides an extraordinarily detailed current snapshot of extra-parliamentary parties in both established and newer democracies. In other publications, the many authors of this article will use PPDB data to study the impact and origins of party organizational differences (see especially Scarrow, Webb, Poguntke forthcoming 2017). Our aim here is more straightforwardly descriptive: we want to use the PPDB data to highlight important similarities between – and major differences across – party organizations in established party democracies. In what follows, we present key findings, pointing out important patterns of practice in terms of resources, structures and linkages.

In this overview, we focus on two main comparisons: across countries and across party families. Previous studies give us mixed messages about what patterns we should expect to find. We know that parties are moulded by their social and institutional environments as well as by their ideological heritage (Harmel, 2002; Harmel and Janda, 1994), but when looking at parties from various parliamentary systems we are uncertain about whether ideological leanings (party family) will outweigh the effects of country-specific institutions. Or indeed, we might find similarity that crosses both categories. Major contributions towards the literature on party types have drawn

Table 2. National party income, by country and party family.

Country/party family	Mean income of national party head offices	Mean party income per billion euros of GDP	Party income per registered voter	Percentage of party income from direct public subsidies
Country				
Australia	17,510,742 (4)	15,757 (4)	1.19 (4)	–
Austria	12,521,560 (5)	40,165 (5)	1.96 (5)	79.88 (5)
Belgium	6,919,590 (12)	17,687 (12)	0.86 (12)	75.41 (12)
Canada	15,152,621 (5)	11,200 (5)	0.62 (5)	34.20 (5)
Czech Republic	8,016,845 (5)	50,390 (5)	0.95 (5)	48.14 (5)
Denmark	3,501,990 (8)	13,934 (8)	0.86 (8)	44.13 (8)
France	60,888,527 (2)	28,987 (2)	1.41 (2)	43.90 (2)
Germany	60,701,745 (7)	21,764 (7)	0.98 (7)	35.35 (7)
Hungary	2,378,244 (4)	23,844 (4)	0.29 (4)	81.63 (4)
Ireland	3,178,000 (4)	18,065 (4)	0.99 (4)	68.50 (4)
Israel	2,494,406 (10)	11,986 (10)	0.44 (10)	81.24 (10)
Italy	28,827,778 (5)	17,739 (5)	0.61 (5)	53.75 (4)
Netherlands	4,508,672 (10)	6,997 (10)	0.36 (10)	36.26 (10)
Norway	10,072,069 (7)	26,812 (7)	2.77 (7)	69.16 (7)
Poland	5,324,045 (5)	13,566 (5)	0.17 (5)	54.90 (5)
Portugal	7,102,583 (6)	41,164 (6)	0.37 (6)	74.17 (6)
Spain	45,787,541 (5)	43,220 (5)	1.28 (5)	67.85 (5)
Sweden	10,378,283 (7)	24,526 (7)	1.42 (7)	71.29 (7)
United Kingdom	12,716,844 (7)	6,262 (7)	0.28 (7)	8.76 (7)
Party family				
Christian Dem/Cons.	21,386,021 (30)	29,083 (30)	1.13 (30)	55.9 (28)
Social Democrats	25,570,184 (24)	34,076 (24)	1.49 (24)	51.4 (23)
Liberals	8,108,648 (21)	12,673 (21)	0.65 (21)	47.2 (20)
Greens	5,738,709 (13)	8,653 (13)	0.42 (13)	54.8 (12)
Left Socialists	6,883,071 (11)	16,183 (11)	0.49 (11)	60.4 (11)
Far Right	7,188,960 (12)	17,060 (12)	0.81 (12)	77.9 (12)
Overall mean	14,177,811 (118)	21,069 (118)	0.94 (111)	57.50 (113)
β (Country)	0.702***	0.569**	0.663***	0.745***
β (Party family)	0.309***	0.445***	0.416***	0.253*
Model R^2	0.593***	0.491	0.572***	0.643***

Note: All amounts are expressed in Euros (using historical exchange rates as quoted for December each year in http://www.oanda.com/currency/historical-rates/). The β and Model R^2 statistics are from multiple classification analyses, with country and party family as the independent variables. GDP: gross domestic product. Figures in parenthesis refer to the number of parties. Note that subsidy data for the Australian parties are missing; it is known in general terms that Australian federal parties are only reimbursed for certain election expenses by the state, but we do not have any Australian data from a general election year, and are thus obliged to treat the country as missing for this variable.
*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

attention to organizational contagion across geographic and ideological boundaries, identifying a developmental trajectory leading from cadre to mass to catch-all to cartel parties as the dominant pattern (Duverger, 1954; Epstein, 1968; Katz and Mair, 1995; Kirchheimer, 1966; Neumann, 1956). These approaches suggest that we should expect our cross-sectional data set to show a large degree of similarity in the way parties organize, while ideological or national factors should not be very important. We will use our comprehensive cross-national data to test how well the idea of a modal party type holds empirically.

Resources: Money, staff, members

We begin by examining three types of resource conventionally associated with organizational strength: money, staff and members. All are potentially important resources that can help parties to win elections.[4]

Money

Money is the first – and perhaps most important – resource on which parties rely. In this section we review what the PPDB tells us about the incomes of national parties' head offices. To facilitate comparison, Table 2 reports national patterns in four ways: average party income, average party income relative to the size of national economy, average income relative to the size of the electorate and the financial dependence of parties on the state (i.e. percentage of income from public subsidies). The first of these indicators tells us which countries have the richest and poorest parties in absolute terms; inevitably, however, these things can be

expected to reflect to a considerable extent the relative size and wealth of each country, and indeed, the generosity of the state, which is why it is also interesting to examine the other indicators. For parties for which we have more than 1 year's worth of data (which is most of the data set), we use the mean score of all available measures; for others we are only able to draw on a single year of data. This table breaks down the data by country and party family in the form of a Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA), which enables us to gauge the relative significance of these two factors as independent variables.[5] The key statistics to focus on here are the β coefficients at the bottom of each column, which provide a measure of the relative strength of country and party family effects in explaining variation in each of these measures.[6]

In terms of absolute levels of income, it is plain from the first column in Table 2 that the German, French and Spanish parties are much wealthier than those of any other country on average, while the Italians also receive well above the overall average of 14.2 million euros per year. In saying this, we should take note of the fact that we only have data for the two largest parties in France, which probably inflates the country's position relative to others in this table.[7] The Israeli, Hungarian, Irish and Danish parties feature among the poorest in these terms. When we control for the size of the national economy, we see that a rather different pattern emerges, in that the Czech, Spanish, Portuguese and Austrian parties enjoy most income relative to gross domestic product (GDP), while the British and Dutch are poorest. However, if we correct for the number of registered electors – the size of the body politic, as it were – we find that the Poles, British and Hungarians are the most impecunious, with their parties only attracting 17, 28, and 29 cents per registered elector, respectively (see Table 2, column 3). At the other end of the scale, the Norwegians and Austrians stand out as being in a league of their own, with the former country's parties earning 2.77 euros and the latter's slightly under 2 euros per elector. Germany, which is at the top of the table for the first measure, is only in the middle of the pack when income is standardized by the size of the national economy or the number of voters. While countries vary widely in the per-voter sums available to their parties, we might reasonably reflect that even two or three euros per elector is not such a high price to pay for one's democracy: arguably, the world's parliamentary democracies get their party politics on the cheap. Finally, the fourth column in Table 2 reveals the extraordinary extent to which the parties in contemporary democracies have become financially dependent on the state. In 11 of the 18 countries for which we have data, the mean dependency ratio is over 50%, and in five countries (Hungary, Israel, Belgium, Austria and Portugal) it is in the range of three quarters or more. At the other end of the scale, the United Kingdom is a stark outlier, with its parties only deriving an average of 9% of their income from the state.

What of the different party families? The lower panel of Table 2 reveals a straightforward and not particularly surprising story when the data are broken down this way. The wealthiest parties are the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats. These well-established party families have dominated much of Europe's post-war history as governing parties. All other party families have lower, but relatively similar, average income levels. The 'big two' are well above the overall mean income for the data set, while all others are considerably below it. This pattern remains broadly true, no matter how you look at it – in raw currency values, relative to national income, or per elector. The Social Democrats do best in each of these regards, while the Green parties fare poorest. There is relatively little variation around the mean in terms of dependence on state funding, except that the small number of far right parties seem especially well served by state support. Multiple Classification Analysis suggests that differences between countries explain more of the variance in each of these measures of party income than differences between party families, in so far as the β coefficients are always higher for the inter-country variations than for the inter-family variations. This is, of course, only indicative evidence: more complex multivariate modelling would be required to draw more definitive conclusions. Nevertheless, it points to the likelihood that patterns of party funding converge around national models more than they do around typical party family models. Furthermore, the fact that *both* inter-country and inter-party family differences are statistically significant across all of these indicators undermines the notion that there is any generally 'typical' model of party organization.

Staff

One of the most under-researched fields in the study of political parties is that of party employees. This is a significant oversight, which leaves us with a deficient understanding of an important aspect of party organizational development. This is particularly so since it seems likely that payroll staff are more important than ever before. In part this is because modern election campaigning and political marketing depend on professional expertise. In addition, it is likely that parties have come to rely increasingly on paid professionals in the context of party membership decline and 'de-energization' around the democratic world (see below).

What evidence does our database provide about current levels of party staff? In investigating this issue, we are reminded of one of the main reasons for the dearth of research into party employees: the sheer difficulty of getting the relevant data. For whatever reason, many parties tend to be reluctant to provide data on their number of payroll employees. The PPDB also suffers from the same reluctance. That said, we believe that we have sufficient information to generate a meaningful picture. We have

Table 3. Number of full-time party staff, by country and party family.

Country	Mean number of full-time paid staff in head office	Mean number of head office staff per 1000 party members	Mean number of full-time paid staff in legislative party	Mean number of legislative staff per MP
Country				
Australia	20.8 (3)	0.4 (3)	–	–
Belgium	30.5 (10)	1.2 (10)	11.9 (8)	1.0 (8)
Czech Republic	28.3 (4)	1.7 (4)	2.8 (4)	0.1 (3)
Denmark	9.0 (4)	0.8 (4)	23.3 (4)	1.6 (4)
Germany	77.0 (1)	1.2 (1)	726.8 (6)	7.0 (6)
Hungary	12.0 (1)	15.0 (1)	57.8 (4)	1.1 (4)
Ireland	27.0 (3)	1.5 (2)	32.1 (5)	1.9 (4)
Israel	12.5 (2)	0.2 (1)	24.3 (3)	4.5 (2)
Italy	64.0 (4)	0.1 (4)	–	–
Netherlands	44.5 (2)	1.2 (2)	–	–
Norway	19.4 (7)	1.0 (6)	24.5 (7)	1.7 (6)
Portugal	1.0 (1)	0.2 (1)	38.0 (6)	2.3 (6)
Spain	105.6 (5)	0.9 (5)	37.7 (5)	0.8 (5)
Sweden	35.8 (8)	1.2 (8)	37.3 (6)	1.1 (6)
United Kingdom	93.1 (7)	1.2 (7)	3.2 (5)	1.2 (5)
Party family				
Christian Dem/Cons.	56.9 (15)	1.0 (15)	161.7 (14)	1.9 (13)
Social Democrats	80.3 (13)	0.8 (13)	111.6 (12)	2.0 (12)
Liberals	31.6 (12)	0.1 (12)	65.9 (12)	1.8 (12)
Greens	11.6 (10)	2.6 (9)	62.9 (9)	2.9 (8)
Left Socialists	34.1 (4)	1.3 (4)	89.5 (8)	2.7 (8)
Far Right	18.1 (6)	1.0 (6)	23.2 (6)	0.8 (6)
Overall mean	49.2 (60)	1.3 (59)	95.3 (61)	2.0 (59)
β (Country)	0.541	0.940***	0.863***	0.897***
β (Party family)	0.465	0.084	0.137	0.244***
Model R^2	0.448	0.914***	0.766	0.854***

Note: The β and Model R^2 statistics are from multiple classification analyses, with country and party family as the independent variables. Figures in parenthesis refer to the number of parties. MP: Member of Parliament.
*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

central party staffing data for 15 countries, and legislative party staffing data for 12 countries, giving us a total of 60–63 parties for our various staffing measures.[8] A further complication is that snapshot comparisons of party payroll figures could be misleading if the data come from different points in the electoral cycle, because many parties hire more staff in election than non-election years. As it happens, most of the PPDB staffing data comes from non-election years, with the exceptions being the parties in Denmark, Ireland (for Fine Gael and Fianna Fail) and Portugal. This means that the particular snapshot we have can be regarded as largely representative of parties' 'normal' mode of operation in non-election years.

What do we find, then? Table 3 shows that the Spanish and British parties have the most head office staff, whether measured in absolute or relative terms.[9] We should perhaps be wary of taking some of the very low national averages too literally, because they are either based on very few cases (e.g. Portugal, Hungary and Israel) or key data are missing for large parties (e.g. the Danish Social Democrats). The figures in Table 3 on legislative party staff are distorted by an obvious outlier – Germany, whose parties appear to employ quite extraordinarily high numbers of parliamentary staff. These party staff are in fact formally employees of the state; however, they have a number of functions, some of which are party-related, so we think that it is justified to regard them as a party resource.[10] Excluding the German parties, the average number of legislative party employees is just 26.2, which is perhaps a more generally representative figure of the database countries as a whole. Of perhaps as much interest as the absolute numbers is the comparison between the first and third columns of Table 3. This shows that parties in countries such as Hungary, Portugal, Israel and Ireland apparently have more of their human resources in parliaments than in the national headquarters, while parties in other countries (including Spain, United Kingdom and the Czech Republic) have opposite distributions of staff resources.

Of course, the number of staff that parties employ to assist their MPs might reasonably be expected to reflect the number of legislators that they return to parliament, so it is also useful to control for the size of parliamentary parties in assessing staffing establishments. Hence, Table 3

also reports the mean number of legislative employees per MP that parties maintain in each country. Overall, this produces a rather modest figure: the German parties are, of course, substantially higher than any others, being able to call on the support of nearly seven staff members for each MP, but in most other countries the norm is only about 1 or 2. By a similar logic, when evaluating the number of central party staff as a resource, it is interesting to control for the numbers of party members whom they might need to serve. This shows relatively little variation across country, there being only slightly more than one employee for every thousand members across the data set as a whole; Hungary would appear to enjoy the highest central staff/member ratio, but this is based on a single case for which we have data, so should be regarded with great caution.

What of patterns by party family? The lower panel of Table 3 reports these, and shows a pattern that is broadly familiar from the analysis of financial data, with the Christian Democratic/Conservative and Social Democratic families predominating in terms of absolute staffing establishments. That said, the Greens and Left Socialists employ high quantities of staff relative to their individual memberships and numbers of MPs. Again, we should note that the β coefficients generally suggest stronger country effects than party family effects in respect of party staffing.

Parties and members

The literature on party members has grown considerably over the past two decades, seemingly in inverse relationship to the numbers of the subject under investigation (including most recently Faucher, 2015; Scarrow, 2015; van Haute and Gauja, 2015). The evidence on the decline of party membership numbers across the democratic world is overwhelming (van Biezen et al., 2012; Katz, Mair, Bardi et al., 1992). In Table 4, we update the story of individual party membership trends by reporting the aggregate membership across all parties for each country, national membership/electorate (ME) ratios and MCA results.

The downward trend that has so often been observed remains apparent in our data. There are 15 PPDB countries for which we can trace changes over time. The mean aggregate membership figure for these countries was 886,850 per country at the start of the time series in the 1980s (1990s in the East European cases); by the mid-to-late 2000s when van Biezen et al. (2012) reported their figures the average had fallen to 633,425 for the same countries; and in the PPDB data for the years 2011–2014, it has dropped to 549,360. Indeed, if we include the four further countries that are part of the PPDB but were not in the van Biezen et al. study (Australia, Canada, France and Israel), the national average falls to just 446,164. Not surprisingly, the picture is similar even after controlling for the size of electorates; the average ME ratio for the original 15 countries was 7.50 in the early 1980s (or 1990 in the case of Hungary), but had declined to 4.14 by the mid-2000s. The PPDB shows that it now stands at 3.48 (or 3.13 including Australia, Canada, France and Israel). The only country in which the ME ratio has not declined in recent years is Ireland, which appears to have experienced a modest increase (from 2.03 to 2.16) in the 5 years following 2008.

What is the picture if we break down the analysis by party family? Table 4 sheds some light on this question. The pattern revealed is familiar: as usual, the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats have the largest average memberships of any party family and the highest average ME ratios. Some of the smaller parties (especially on the Far Right) have surprisingly high ME ratios where they are successful, but this is only in a limited number of countries. In summary, then, the Christian Democrats, Conservatives and Social Democrats continue to have the highest ratios of members to electors in their countries. Once again, the β coefficients in Table 4 suggest greater variation by country than by party family.

To summarize, in examining the organizational resources at the disposal of the 122 parties in our database, we have found that ME ratios continue to fall in almost all the PPDB countries, such that little more than 3% of the electorate now join political parties in these disparate states; that German, Spanish and French parties seem to be the richest in terms of funding and staff; that parties in the majority of these democracies now rely on state subsidies for the majority of their income; and that party staffing levels are relatively modest in most countries, although extraordinarily high in Germany. Moreover, such variations as we find across these measures of organizational resources are better explained by country than by party family.

Structures: Surprising uniformity?

Extra-parliamentary organizations first developed in late 19th and early 20th centuries, stimulated by the organizational efforts of opposition parties, including Socialists and workers in Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom, Liberals in the United Kingdom, farmers' parties in Scandinavia and religious parties in Belgium and the Netherlands. These parties had widely differing aims, but many of them adopted very similar organizational structures, operating as 'subscriber democracies'. In other words, they were clubs with statutes, membership procedures and annual dues, local branches, annual or biennial national congresses as the nominally highest party organ and smaller executive committees holding broad authority between meetings of the national conference (Morris, 2000; Scarrow, 2015: ch. 2).

By the middle of the 20th century, parties in most parliamentary democracies had adopted some variant of the subscriber democracy model of party organization. Of course, formal structures may not tell us much about actual distributions of influence within political parties. Nevertheless, the adoption and spread of the individual member/congress model seems to signal acceptance of the idea of parties as micro-polities, and

Table 4. Mean party membership, by country and party family.

Country	Mean party membership	Mean party membership as % of national electorate (ME)	Total national party membership	Total national membership as % of national electorate (ME)
Country				
Australia (2013)	61,425 (4)	0.42 (4)	245,700	1.67
Austria (2011)	170,704 (5)	2.67 (5)	853,520	13.35
Belgium (2012)	34,542 (11)	0.43 (11)	379,962	4.73
Canada (2011)	50,250 (4)	0.21 (4)	201,000	0.84
Czech Republic (2011 ±)	29,482 (5)	0.35 (5)	147,410	1.75
Denmark (2011)	18,706 (8)	0.46 (8)	149,648	3.68
France (2012)	226,743 (2)	0.52 (2)	453,486	1.04
Germany (2012)	217,101 (6)	0.35 (6)	1,302,606	2.10
Hungary (2011)	21,530 (4)	0.26 (4)	86,120	1.04
Ireland (2013)	17,413 (4)	0.54 (4)	69,652	2.16
Israel (2011 ±)	59,534 (5)	1.05 (5)	351,668	6.21
Italy (2011 ±)	421,205 (5)	0.90 (5)	2,106,025	4.50
Netherlands (2013)	30,586 (10)	0.24 (10)	305,860	2.40
Norway (2012)	24,237 (6)	0.67 (6)	145,422	4.02
Poland (2013 ±)	40,257 (6)	0.13 (6)	241,542	0.75
Portugal (2011 ±)	47,638 (6)	0.50 (6)	285,828	2.98
Spain (2011 ±)	298,800 (5)	0.84 (5)	1,494,000	4.30
Sweden (2011 ±)	31,579 (8)	0.43 (8)	252,632	3.44
United Kingdom (2014)	63,735 (7)	0.14 (7)	446,145	0.98
Party family				
Christian Dem/Cons.	158,094 (29)	0.91 (29)	–	–
Social Democrats	130,727 (24)	0.75 (24)	–	–
Liberals	35,634 (21)	0.35 (21)	–	–
Greens	14,141 (13)	0.11 (13)	–	–
Left Socialists	30,353 (10)	0.28 (10)	–	–
Far Right	36,171 (14)	0.36 (14)	–	–
Overall mean	85,263 (111)	0.54 (110)	446,164 (19)	3.13 (19)
β (Country)	0.631***	0.557***		
β (Party family)	0.353***	0.348***		
Model R^2	0.529***	0.376***		

Note: ± Indicates that year is approximate because data come from various years (e.g. data for some parties in a given country are for 2011, while for others they might be for 2010 or 2012). Note that the national membership total and ME ratio for France are only based on two parties, and so are certainly underestimates of the true figures. The total national membership for Israel is based on data for six parties, but the MCA is only able to include data for 5 Israeli parties since it was not possible to ascribe a meaningful party family to the National Religious Party. The Canadian data, based on 2011 news reports, do not include the Conservative Party as no reliable numbers were available; thus, both the overall total and party mean numbers are somewhat artificially low. ME: membership/electorate.
Significance level: ***$p < 0.01$.

recognition that permanent party organization can be useful for policy implementation and for electoral mobilization.

How much particular party organizations actually contribute to legitimacy, or help electoral mobilization, are empirical questions. With regard to both legitimacy and mobilization we would expect that some arrangements are more effective than others, and that the impact of similar structures may vary under different circumstances. As a result, even if many parties adhere to a basically similar model, we would expect to find cross-party organizational variation, not least because parties have incentives to engage in organizational experimentation. For instance, a string of parties have made headlines in recent years by claiming that they are going to do politics in a new way, and that they therefore have novel party structures and organizational practices. (These include the poetically named 'liquid democracy' of the German Pirates Party, and the Operating System software of the Italian Five Star Movement.) If organizational novelty is a voter winner, we would expect such experimentation to flourish.

Partly confounding this prediction is one striking finding from our survey of contemporary party organizations in parliamentary democracies: the sheer *uniformity* in basic organizational structures and rules. Both old and new parties adhere to a subscriber democracy organizational model in which dues-paying members are the *polis* for most or all important decisions, and in which the party conference is (formally) the party's highest organ.

Representative assemblies

Almost all the party statutes establish representative structures for internal decision-making, with the party congress at the formal apex. The following section says more about the formal distribution of power among party levels; for now, what we want to emphasize is that the member/congress template still plays a prominent role in party claims to be internally democratic. Most party statutes stipulate that the party congresses will meet regularly, with 75% of parties requiring these assemblies to be held more than once every 3 years. Across party families there is modest variation in the frequency with which these need to be held. Most notably, three quarters of Green Parties require their congress to meet at least annually. In contrast, the 'old left' Left Socialists tend to set looser requirements, with 40% stipulating that party congresses must be held only once every 4 or 5 years.

Most parties have a smaller executive committee heading their extra-parliamentary organizations. Because these bodies have different names across parties, we asked our respondents to tell us about the highest executive body recognized in the party statutes. In other words, we are not interested in cabinet meetings or informal meetings between party leaders and their trusted advisors. As a rough rule of thumb, we suggest that the smaller these bodies are, the more likely it is that they are conducting some of the real business of leading the party. About half the parties have executive committees with 20 or fewer members; these are small enough to be effective governing bodies. When we compare this to analyses based on the data documented in the Katz/Mair *Handbook*, we see a remarkable stability in the configuration of the essential intra-party bodies. In other words, organizational innovation has been very limited over time (Poguntke, 2000: ch. 6).

In the majority of parties (56%), these executive committees report directly to the party congress. Most of the remaining parties have one additional medium-sized committee between the party congress and the executive. The incidence of such intermediate-level committees is inversely related to the frequency of the required meetings of party congresses: the more committee layers, the greater the time span between required meetings of the party congress ($r = 0.259$). In terms of the relation between different 'faces' of the party within the party organs, it is noteworthy that legislators are well-represented in the organs of the extra-parliamentary parties: in half the parties, at least 20% of the party's executive committee are also members of the national legislature.

Leadership powers

Despite the widespread adherence to the subscriber-democracy organizational model, party statutes vary widely in the powers and responsibilities they grant to their party leaders. These differences affect both the extent to which leaders' roles are spelled out in statutes, and the specified relationship between the party leader and the extra-parliamentary party. Among those that explicitly address the leader's role, two-fifths refer to the leader's position as external representative of the party. Just over a quarter specify that the leader is formally accountable to the party congress. In terms of leaders' obligations and powers, a fifth of the party statutes give the party leader the right to help select his or her deputy, and to summon the party congress, while nearly a third give the leader the right to summon the party officials.[11] More than 90% of the statutes explicitly mention that the party leader could or should attend the party congress or party executive. A small number (5%) formally give their leaders the right to approve or veto coalition agreements; similarly, only 7% of the parties give the party leader a statutory right to appoint one or more members of the party executive.

The nine items mentioned above can be combined to produce an additive index of leadership power. Parties are widely dispersed on this index, approximately following a normal distribution, but no party earns the top possible score for leadership autonomy (see Appendix 2 for details). As Table 5 shows, on average the parties do not give their leaders so many of these powers, the overall mean being 3.29 for the 81 cases for which we are able to generate index scores. The score for Italy (7.0) is far higher than for any other country, but this is derived from just one party (the Democrats). In fact, only 5% of all PPDB cases score as highly as this, so it is far from typical. Around three quarters of parties score between 3 and 5 on the leadership power index, with Spain, Portugal, Canada, Hungary and Belgium achieving the highest averages, and Australia, Germany and the Netherlands the lowest. In terms of party families, the Far Right give their leaders most formal power and the Left Socialists least, with the other families being fairly tightly clustered between these two political antipodes. As usual, however, it is evident from the β coefficients that country effects are far stronger than party family effects in explaining variation in this aspect of party organization.

To be sure, statutes do not tell us everything about how parties distribute decision-making authority between the party leader, the extra-parliamentary organization, and the parliamentary party. Yet, the correlations in Table 6 point towards an interesting and consistent pattern, which indicates that formal powers are systematically related to other aspects of parties' organizational life: the larger the party (whether in terms of members, seats held in the legislature or number of people sitting on the national executive), the greater the leader's power. It is also noteworthy that leaders' rights seem to grow the more frequently parties hold congresses. On the face of it, this is a counter-intuitive finding, although it might simply be a function of party size, in that larger parties can afford to hold more frequent congresses.

Table 5. Leadership strength, by country and party family.

Country/party family	Leadership strength
Country	
Australia	2.25 (4)
Belgium	4.44 (9)
Canada	4.80 (5)
Czech Republic	3.00 (5)
Denmark	3.00 (8)
Germany	2.50 (6)
Hungary	4.50 (4)
Ireland	3.50 (4)
Italy	7.00 (1)
Netherlands	2.50 (2)
Norway	3.50 (6)
Portugal	5.00 (5)
Spain	5.40 (5)
Sweden	3.13 (8)
United Kingdom	3.29 (7)
Party family	
Christian Dem/Cons.	3.95 (21)
Social Democrats	3.95 (19)
Liberals	3.63 (16)
Greens	3.13 (8)
Left Socialists	2.78 (9)
Far Right	4.33 (6)
Overall mean	3.70 (79)
β (Country)	0.722***
β (Party family)	0.346*
Model R^2	0.608

Note: Figures in parenthesis refer to the number of parties.
*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

Table 6. Leadership strength and other party organs, bivariate relationships.

	Correlation	*N*
Executive size	0.245**	78
Congress frequency	0.257**	74
Number of party members	0.294***	80
% of seats in national legislature	0.215*	81

Note: N refers to the number of parties.
***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.10$.

To conclude, the predominant finding of this section is the striking similarity in what might be termed the organizational skeletons of the parties. Whereas the previous section showed considerable cross-national variation in the distribution of resources, this section shows the continued dominance of the subscriber democracy model across established and newer democracies, and across party families. This enduring similarity is seldom remarked upon, but we find it notable, not least because it has survived several waves of populist challenges over the past four decades. Parties that proudly deviate from this basic model, and which claim to pursue a new brand of democracy, tend to receive a great deal of attention from journalists and scholars alike. In fact, however, few of those parties have gained enough traction to join and stay in national legislatures for multiple terms. Those that do remain have tended to change their organizations in ways that make them more similar to the organizations of their older peers. Such organizational convergence is undoubtedly encouraged by national regulations and statutes that dictate some of the fundamental organizational options for parties and/or voluntary organizations. Yet that is not the whole explanation, because in some cases party structures predate the laws, and in any case parties themselves are in a position to alter the regulations if they wished to do so. If the organizational convergence is not driven by ideology, perhaps it has been driven by the model's functional utility (cf. Poguntke, 1998), and/or by its perceived legitimacy.

Parties as democratic linkage

Measuring intra-party democracy

We have seen in the previous section that political parties largely resemble each other when it comes to the configuration of their core party bodies. However, when we take a closer look at how their organizations provide for linkage to the citizenry, we find remarkable variation. This is at odds with the prevailing narrative in the literature that assumes a succession of dominant party types.

The membership organization of political parties is one of their principal ways of generating linkage to society (Poguntke, 2000). While adherents of a Schumpeterian view of democracy would argue that democracy does not necessarily require democratic linkage through parties, others maintain that it is virtually unthinkable except in these terms. Obviously, we cannot decide this debate here. However, our data allows us to investigate the empirical realities irrespective of normative desirability. We have collected data on a considerable number of variables that are related to the democratic quality of political parties' internal politics. These can be combined to create valid measures of intra-party democracy (IPD). For details of the construction of these measures see Appendix 3 and von dem Berge and Poguntke (forthcoming 2017).

As defined here, the benchmark of IPD is that it maximizes the involvement of party members in the decisions that are central to a party's political life, including programme writing, and personnel selection and other intra-organizational decision-making.[12] From this perspective, it seems plausible to argue that the degree of organizational *decentralization* represents a distinct component of IPD that should be measured independently of general *inclusiveness*, a point several scholars have made elsewhere (Hazan and Rahat, 2010; Scarrow, 2005: 6; von dem Berge et al., 2013). However, for the sake of parsimony, in this examination we will focus solely on the degree of

inclusiveness to measure IPD, because empirically these concepts overlap. For instance, a higher degree of decentralization automatically leads to a higher degree of inclusiveness because when more party bodies are involved (like the German *Land* parties or the British constituency parties), more members will be involved – even if these are the local party leaders and not all the members.[13]

Two variants of IPD

In measuring IPD we make a theoretically based distinction between assembly-based and plebiscitary variants of IPD, constructing separate indices to measure both types of IPD. Each of these represents a different approach to discerning the will of the group. Assembly-based IPD assigns decision-making to meetings, whose participants debate propositions and then take a decision. Plebiscitary IPD separates the stages of debate and decision-making, and places the latter stage in the hands of the mass membership via a ballot. Both types may be more or less inclusive. While assembly-based IPD is often associated with decisions made by a meeting of party delegates, it also includes decisions made at town hall type assemblies in which all attendees are eligible to debate and vote. We contend that plebiscitary decision-making embodies a fundamentally different logic as it provides no way to deliberate and reach compromise. It is the politics of 'either/or', which arguably gives a lot of power to the leaders (Katz and Mair, 1995: 21), even though it may also be exploited as a leadership-challenging device. In contrast, assembly-based IPD provides opportunities to amend the question and to take repeated rounds of voting. What counts for us now is that it follows an inherently different logic (Cross and Katz, 2013).

Following this logic, our assembly-based IPD-index (AIPD) measures the inclusiveness of party decision-making based on discussions within party bodies and assemblies, including assemblies of all members. It covers the three essential components of IPD, namely programme writing, personnel selection (leaders and candidates) and organizational structure (referring to the relative strength of party bodies like congress and executive). A higher index score indicates that a more inclusive party body has the final say on decisions over personnel and policy and intra-organizational power is less top-heavy (von dem Berge and Poguntke (2017).

Our plebiscitary IPD index (PIPD) measures the degree to which parties allow for non-assembly decisions on a one member, one vote basis. These decisions are made by the lone party member at home on a computer screen, or via the casting of a ballot through the post or a party-run polling station. It covers only programme-writing and personnel-selection. A higher index score means that a party provides more opportunities for ballots in these matters. The PIPD index assigns a positive value to all parties which incorporate such procedures in their rules, even if they are optional or apply only in certain situations or are combined with assembly-based procedures. It is difficult to envisage a large party organization which is exclusively based on plebiscitary decision-making (even though the Italian Five Star Movement may come close), but we found a surprisingly high number of parties which mix these two decision styles. Over 55% of the parties in our study provide for some plebiscitary decision-making.

There are several reasons why the two variants of IPD are combined in different ways in individual party families and countries. For instance, highly inclusive plebiscitary procedures might be a substitute for less inclusive assembly-based procedures. Think, for example, of a populist party which uses plebiscites to legitimate the policies of its leadership while providing little space for genuine internal discussion. Such substitution strategies are not necessarily confined to populist parties. A key element of the cartel party argument is the suggestion that leaders of established parties may seek to enhance their autonomy by promoting plebiscitary modes of decision-making which bypass middle-level elites (Katz and Mair, 1995: 21). Yet inclusive plebiscitary procedures could also be additive, if parties with a strong tradition of assembly based internal democracy feel compelled to adapt to the pressure of a public discourse which regards plebiscitary decision-making as inherently superior to assembly based modes of democracy (Fuchs, 2007; Pappi, 2015: 224–25; Zittel, 2006). In the populist case, we would expect a very low AIPD score to go together with a high PIPD value, while in the latter ('pan-democratic') case we would expect a positive correlation. Finally, party legislation or institutional learning may induce fairly similar patterns of IPD in some countries while the absence of such mechanisms may lead to substantial within-country variation.

Conceptually, our AIPD measure is a formative index (Diamantopoulos et al., 2008; Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer, 2001) consisting of three logically independent components: programme-writing, personnel-selection and organizational structure. Unfortunately, for many of our cases we have incomplete information about all three components. However, because testing shows that these components are highly correlated, we have decided to include all cases with valid data for at least 2 of our 3 components.[14] Our calculations are based on data for the years 2011–2014 using the most recent available measurement point.

We start by asking whether our conceptual distinction between assembly-based and plebiscitary IPD holds empirically. First, the relatively weak Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.37 indicates that both indices are related, yet most likely measure separate dimensions. This supports our contention that it makes sense to look at both dimensions when trying to assess the extent to which parties are internally democratic, because some parties are inclusive with one type of procedure, but not with the other.

Patterns of IPD: Divergence rather than uniformity

When we turn to simple descriptive statistics, we also see substantial differences between our two measures. Both indices have a theoretical minimum of 0 and a maximum of 1. The results for the assembly-based IPD index show that all but one of the 122 parties included in our study have internal structures that offer at least some internal democracy. The exception is the one-man Dutch Freedom Party of Geert Wilders which has no party members and hence no internal structure to speak of. It has therefore been coded missing for our IPD indices. Our data show that the AIPD index, which measures IPD based on meetings and exchange of arguments within party bodies, represents the essential core of IPD. We have a valid measurement for all parties, and none of the parties comes close to the minimum possible value of our index (the lowest value is 0.26) while some parties go all the way towards almost perfectly democratic internal procedures (see Appendix A3). Whereas most parties cluster in the middle range of the AIPD index, the pattern changes substantially for the plebiscitary variant of IPD. More than 40% of the parties in our study have not institutionalized any plebiscitary mechanisms, but some parties reach our maximum value of 1.0.

When we break down our data by country, we clearly find that nation-specific factors play an important role, a finding which further weakens the notion of any overarching tendency among parties. Table 7 reports the assembly-based and plebiscitary IPD indices, by country. Let us first focus on the assembly-based IPD. There is some spread within countries – and this is to be expected – but in 11 of the 19 countries the difference between the highest and lowest AIPD score is not more than 30 points, and in some countries, it is considerably less (e.g. Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Norway, Portugal, and Spain). There are greater differences in the general levels of AIPD between countries. Austria, France, Poland, Portugal and Spain stand out for having relatively low AIPD values, while Belgium, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK are characterized by generally high levels of AIPD.

The picture changes entirely when we focus on the plebiscitary variant of IPD. Here we see two patterns. There is considerably more spread within countries: in some countries, there is complete uniformity because of the absence of plebiscitary practices (Austria, Czech Republic and Poland), in 14 countries one or more parties have not introduced any plebiscitary measures, while a few of the other countries stand out because most or all parties register fairly high PIPD values (Belgium, Canada, Italy and the United Kingdom). In the latter four countries, it seems reasonable to speculate that we are seeing the effect of institutional diffusion. In the remaining countries, parties vary widely in the extent to which they have adopted plebiscitary mechanisms. If diffusion pressures are strong, we would expect that coming years will bring an upward convergence on the PIPD index, at least in countries where at least one party has already adopted such measures.

Table 7. Assembly-based and plebiscitary IPD, by country and party family.

Country/party family	AIPD	AIPD range	PIPD	PIPD range
Country				
Australia	0.64 (4)	0.10	0.38 (4)	0.67
Austria	0.46 (5)	0.40	0.00 (5)	–
Belgium	0.71 (12)	0.39	0.60 (12)	0.75
Canada	0.68 (5)	0.07	0.57 (5)	0.34
Czech Republic	0.64 (5)	0.10	0.00 (3)	–
Denmark	0.57 (8)	0.48	0.15 (8)	0.50
France	0.40 (2)	0.19	0.50 (2)	–
Germany	0.73 (6)	0.30	0.21 (6)	0.50
Hungary	0.68 (4)	0.27	0.06 (4)	0.25
Ireland	0.72 (5)	0.32	0.13 (5)	0.67
Israel	0.62 (6)	0.50	0.42 (6)	1.00
Italy	0.49 (5)	0.45	0.67 (5)	0.67
Netherlands	0.78 (9)	0.41	0.44 (9)	1.00
Norway	0.76 (6)	0.05	0.21 (6)	0.50
Poland	0.48 (6)	0.17	0.00 (5)	–
Portugal	0.44 (6)	0.11	0.25 (6)	0.50
Spain	0.39 (5)	0.08	0.07 (5)	0.33
Sweden	0.62 (8)	0.25	0.09 (8)	0.25
United Kingdom	0.78 (7)	0.33	0.63 (7)	0.42
Party family				
Christian Dem/ Cons.	0.59 (30)	0.58	0.26 (28)	1.00
Social Democrats	0.67 (24)	0.62	0.45 (24)	1.00
Liberals	0.63 (21)	0.58	0.35 (21)	1.00
Greens	0.73 (14)	0.73	0.32 (14)	0.75
Left Socialists	0.60 (11)	0.47	0.12 (11)	0.50
Far Right	0.55 (14)	0.62	0.22 (13)	1.00
Overall mean	0.63 (114)		0.31 (111)	
β (Country)	0.700***		0.692***	
β (Party family)	0.256**		0.213	
Model R^2	0.589***		0.561**	

Note: Figures in parenthesis refer to the number of parties. PPDB: Political Party Database; AIPD: assembly-based intra-party democracy; PIPD: plebiscitary intra-party democracy.
*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

A closer look at the main party families shows clear differences between them in terms of IPD usage. They do not, however, always meet the obvious theoretical expectations. For instance, while the Greens are associated with calls for democratization of public life, overall they have only a mid-range score on our plebiscitary index, although they are the most inclusive party family when it comes to assembly-based intra-party politics. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, come closest to our pan-democratic model, with comparatively high scores for both types of practices (see Table 7). Christian Democrats/Conservatives

conform to the conventional wisdom in that they register average assembly-based IPD scores and fairly low plebiscitary values.

Surprisingly, the Far Right does not score high on the plebiscitary index even though this category encompasses populist right-wing parties.[15] Finally, the most notable result is that Left Socialist parties are by far the most reluctant party family when it comes to plebiscitary measures. It seems plausible to speculate that this may reflect the influence of traditional left-wing organizational thinking, with its considerable emphasis on party discipline. Although plebiscitary politics have often been linked with political extremism, our evidence suggests that parties on the far left or right of the spectrum have been most hesitant to embrace plebiscitary measures.

Finally, when looking at the β values in Table 7 we see once again the familiar story of much stronger effects by country than by ideological family. However, there are considerable differences regarding the balance between assembly-based and plebiscitary forms of IPD, which reminds us that we should not too readily generalize about one dominant organizational model of party organization.

Connecting resources, structures and linkages

After presenting this descriptive overview of the main findings of the PPDB Round 1 data, it is the time to begin examining how our three analytical dimensions relate to one another empirically. This is not the place to investigate and test causal hypotheses, but we can at least provide the grounds for developing such hypotheses by exploring some basic statistical relationships within the data. We do this here by reporting the simple bivariate correlation coefficients for a number of indicators that are drawn from across the three dimensions. The key indicators include AIPD as a measure of democratic linkage, leadership strength as a measure of organizational structure, and three organizational resource measures: ME ratio, party income/GDP ratio, and percentage of party income that comes from state subsidies.

The results reveal a number of interesting relationships across the three dimensions of analysis. First, in terms of association between AIPD and the other dimensions, we find that the less internally democratic parties are, the more members they have relative to electors, the richer and the more dependent on state funding they are, and the stronger their leaders are. The last two of these correlations are statistically significant at the 5% significance level or better. Second, there are also politically noteworthy associations between organizational structure and resources, in that the stronger leaders are within their parties, the more members they have as a proportion of the electorate, and the richer and the more dependent on state funding they tend to be; these are all statistically significant relationships at the 5% level or better. The relevant details are reported in Table 8.

Table 8. Correlations across dimensions.

	AIPD	Leadership strength
Leadership strength	−0.254** (81)	
Party income from state (%)	−0.272*** (113)	0.375*** (76)
Party income/GDP	−0.117 (118)	0.237** (80)
ME ratio	−0.151 (114)	0.223** (80)

Note: Figures in parenthesis represent number of parties. ME: membership/electorate; AIPD: assembly-based intra-party democracy; GDP: gross domestic product.
*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

These correlations point to areas for further investigation. For instance, they suggest different categories of parties that might exist. The first is a group of parties that are (in national terms) large, rich and heavily dependent on state subsidies; these will also tend to be relatively 'top-down', leader-dominated organizations. By contrast, the second group is the opposite of all these things: it consists of parties that are (in their own national contexts) relatively small, poor, and not so well supported by the state, but which are more internally democratic and less leadership-dominated. Whether we can actually distinguish such clusters of parties is a task for future research.

Our preliminary findings also invite researchers to address some of the major 'so what?' questions of this field of political science: for instance, what are the consequences of these organizational patterns for the legitimacy of party and political systems? If a country has a preponderance of large, leader-dominated and state-dependent parties, does this lead to higher levels of public dissatisfaction with the parties and/or political systems as a whole? And what of the consequences for public policy: are such countries more or less likely to generate policy outcomes that represent the views of a majority of electors? Here, we can only raise such questions rather than attempt to answer them. However, we suggest that the PPDB data and measures not only point the way for politically important lines of future research but also provide some tools that should help researchers who want to tackle these research puzzles.

Conclusions

Our analyses of the PPDB data have demonstrated a remarkable coexistence of uniformity and diversity. When it comes to some of the main indicators of party organizational capacity such as party members, staff and finance, all evidence points in the direction of continuing trends that

have been diagnosed for many years. Comparisons with previous studies clearly show that in most cases party membership has continued to decline, while financial resources and paid labour have continued to grow. Yet, substantial differences persist between party families and, more importantly, between countries.

On the other hand, we find truly remarkable uniformity regarding the core architecture of party organizations. Despite the enormous attention some groups of new parties have attracted in the media and in scholarly literature, the evidence is clear: if they survive, they adapt their organizational skeleton to a common template. Virtually all have regular party conferences which function as supreme 'law making' intra-party bodies; they normally have one (some two) party leaders with clearly defined powers, and they tend to have a supreme executive body. This convergence occurs even where laws do not require it, suggesting that in these countries this organizational style has become a normative imperative or a functional necessity – or both.

This image of overwhelming uniformity changes again when we look more closely at how these member-associations operate, creating indices to measure their openness with regard to assembly-based and plebiscitary democracy. Here, we find substantial variation between countries and party families. While assembly-based IPD is the standard model of intra-party decision-making, at greater or lesser degrees of inclusiveness, the provisions for plebiscitary IPD vary substantially. They are simply non-existent in a considerable number of parties, and in some countries altogether. Overall, we see rather wide variation in how parties combine these different types of practices, and in the extent to which they have expanded the locus of decision-making.

In sum, one clear message from this preliminary examination of the first round PPDB data is that there is still a lot of mileage in closer examination of the details of party organization. Uniformity, which is all too often in the limelight, is clearly only part of the story. While scholars have a tendency to look for organizational trends, individual parties often seek to gain electoral advantage through organizational innovation. Thus, while party organizations across modern democracies have much in common now, there is more diversity, particularly between countries, than many classics of the party literature imply. If parties and their popular organizations can play crucial roles in integrating citizens and their political demands into the political process, as much literature on representative democracy asserts, then these organizational differences deserve continued scrutiny, because they can have important political consequences.

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to all funders, especially our national funding bodies and our universities who have supported primary research, travel and meetings for all project members. We also gratefully acknowledge the helpful comments received by two anonymous reviewers. Of course, the usual disclaimer applies.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work has been supported primarily by an Open Research Area (ORA) project grant funded by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft PO 370/11-1, Economic and Social Research Council (UK) ES/L016613/1, and National Science Foundation (USA) 106498. A full listing of funders to date is included on the Political Party Database website, (http://www.politicalpartydb.org).

Notes

1. Those using Political Party Database Round 1 data should reference this article for a full introduction to the data set and to acknowledge those who contributed to it. The data is available from the project website as of 1 January 2017.
2. We consciously violated this rule in a few places, for instance when we asked team members to not only give the official rules for candidate selection but to also give an expert opinion about which levels of the party had the most influence in the most recent round of candidate selections. In these places, those who distrust the judgment of a single expert can ignore these variables and rely solely on the official stories.
3. The countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. For a full list of parties covered in Round 1, see website.
4. This is not to overlook the obvious fact that party members might also be considered a form of linkage between parties and society, but here they will be examined from the perspective of organizational resources.
5. We assigned parties to party families following this rubric: according to membership in various transnational party organizations, if available. If not, we asked our country team leaders to code into one of seven categories, or 'other'. Because parties themselves showed most movement over time between the 'far right' and 'radical populist' labels, we combined these parties for purposes of this article.
6. Multiple classification analysis is an additive modelling technique which is appropriate for interval-level dependent variables and nominal-level independent variables, as is the case here. The β coefficients express the explained variance in the dependent variable as a proportion of the total variance, while controlling for the effects of other independent variables. More precisely, the explained variance is taken to be that which is accounted for by the categories of the independent variables. This is 'between groups' variance (in our case, the

variance explained by membership of either country or party family groups), while any other unexplained variance is 'within-groups' variance. The rank-order of the βs tells us the relative importance of the predictors in a model. The β coefficients' significance levels are based on the F-ratio statistic (Retherford and Choe, 1993).

7. In addition, our results may be distorted somewhat because it includes data on election years for 7 of our 19 countries.
8. Unfortunately, there are rather fewer cases for which we have both central and legislative party staffing data – only approximately one-third of the total number of parties, which we feel is too few from which to gain a clear picture, so we do not report those figures here.
9. This also appears true of Germany, but we have head office staffing data for only one German party, so we cannot be sure if this is representative.
10. The extraordinary number of staff employed by parliamentary parties in Germany owes something to the difficulty of attracting state funding beyond a fixed 'absolute ceiling' which limits the overall sum of money that can go from the state to political parties. This ceiling did not change for many years until the Bundestag introduced indexation in 2013. The way around this for the parties was to increase the number of their parliamentary staff, all of whom are paid for by the state. According to German legal doctrine, their work pertains to the sphere of the state rather than the parties, since formally the parliamentary parties are not supposed to do things that directly benefit the extra-parliamentary party. The reality, however, is that these personnel often split their time between working for MPs as personal assistants and working for the parliamentary (and sometimes extra-parliamentary) parties. In this way they clearly constitute a resource of the party, then; however, it does render the German situation somewhat unique, so readers may prefer to exclude the German figures when reflecting on the overall averages for parliamentary party staff.
11. Perhaps unexpectedly, there are no large differences between party families in terms of the leader's accountability to the party conference. Green parties were slightly more likely to specify this, but all party families were in the range from 25–37%.
12. Our indices include only rights for full members, and do not take account of whether similar rights are offered to registered supporters or other kinds of party affiliates. Thus, the indices do not rate parties more highly if they open participation to non-members. Our theoretical justification is that including open procedures strains the theoretical notion of 'intra' party democracy, which is our primary interest here. Within the current Political Party Database universe, these situations are empirically rare, though some have been high profile cases, such as the UK Labour Party election in 2015 which allowed participation by 'registered supporters' who were not full members.
13. The indices used in this section are based on von dem Berge and Poguntke, 2017. Other members of the Political Party Database team have constructed different indices of IPD for other articles. We do not suggest that this coding scheme is the only way to analyse differences in intra-party governance, but we think it is a plausible one. Different coding schemes would affect the details of relationships reported in the following sections, but probably would not change their major conclusions.
14. The situation is different for the plebiscitary index which includes only two components. Here we have simply used all available data.
15. To a degree, this may be due to the fact that we have combined two party groups that analytically belong to separate categories, namely extreme right and populist right-wing parties. We have chosen to do so because this distinction, even though theoretically meaningful, is frequently empirically fuzzy as many parties meander between extreme right-wing and more 'acceptable' right-wing populist appeals. If we look at the two groups separately, we can see that populists record higher PIPD values (0.32 and 0.14). However, they are still not conspicuously high.

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Appendix 1

Table A1. PPDB round 1 country teams.

Australia	**Anika Gauja**
Austria	**Wolfgang C. Müller**, Manès Weisskircher
Belgium	**Kris Deschouwer, Emilie van Haute**
Canada	**William Cross**, Scott Pruysers
Czech Republic	**Petr Kopecký**
Denmark	**Karina Kosiara-Pedersen**
France	**Elodie Fabre**
Germany	**Thomas Poguntke**, Sophie Karow, Jan Kette
Hungary	**Zsolt Enyedi, Daniel Rona**
Ireland	**David M. Farrell**, Connor Little
Israel	**Gideon Rahat**, Alona Dolinsky
Italy	**Luciano Bardi**, Enrico Calossi, Eugenio Pizzimenti
Netherlands	**Ruud Koole**, Marijn Nagtzaam
Norway	**Elin Allern**
Poland	**Aleks Szczerbiak**, Anna Mikulska
Portugal	**Marina Costa-Lobo**, Isabella Razuolli
Spain	**Tània Verge**, Arnau Rovira
Sweden	**Nicholas Aylott**, Niklas Bolin
United Kingdom	**Paul Webb**, Annika Hennl, Dan Keith
Database Editor	**Susan Scarrow**
Data Manager	**Benjamin Danforth**
Project Directors	**Thomas Poguntke**, Susan Scarrow, Paul Webb
Advisory Board	Ingrid van Biezen, Kenneth Janda, Richard Katz, Miki Caul Kittilson

Note: Coordinators listed in boldface type.

Appendix 2

Table A2. Index of leadership strength.

Index	Frequency	%
1.0	4	4.9
2.0	7	8.6
3.0	34	42.0
4.0	15	18.5
5.0	11	13.6
6.0	6	7.4
7.0	4	4.9
Sum	81	100.0

Note: This is a composite index constructed by adding together the total number of leadership rights from the following items: Leader may help select deputy leader (21%); may summon party officials (31.6%); may summon party congress (22.1%); may attend party executive (93.6%); may attend party congress (91.6%); may appoint at least one member of party executive (7.2%); must consent to coalition agreements (5.3%); is designated party's 'external representative' (41.1%); is expressly accountable to party congress (27.4%). Each 'right' is coded 1; where the leader does not have a right, it is coded 0. Note that where a leader is *not* statutorily accountable to party congress it is coded 1. The index has a theoretical range running from 0 to 9, although empirically it only runs from 1 to 7.

Appendix 3

The IPD indices

Assembly-based intra-party democracy (AIPD). Our assembly-based intra-party democracy index is based on relevant Political Party Database variables which were recoded according to their bearing on the inclusiveness of intra-party decision-making. As a rule, we coded variable items as 0.00 or 0.25 if they indicate that a given party has no or a modest level of inclusiveness on this specific aspect of intra-party democracy; 0.50 was allocated for a medium level and 0.75 and 1.00 for high levels of inclusiveness. In some cases this involved ranking party arenas first according to their inclusiveness. Table A3 illustrates the logic: A party where the party congress has a final vote on the manifesto has the highest score on this particular aspect while a party where the leader has the final word is considered to be least inclusive.

Table A3. Example of coding PPDB variables. PPDB-Question: Who has the final vote on the manifesto?

PPDB answer option	AIPD value	Effect on AIPD
Party Congress	1.00 (max IPD; most 'inclusive')	High inclusiveness
Party Sub-Units	0.75	
Party Legislators	0.50	Medium inclusivness
Executive Committee	0.25	Low inclusivenes
Party Leader	0.00 (min IPD; least 'inclusive')	

PPDB: Political Party Database; AIPD: assembly-based intra-party democracy; IPD: intra-party democracy.

The AIPD index is made up of three components for which we have a different number of variables. In order to weigh them equally, we have first calculated a score for each component; the final AIPD index value is then the arithmetic mean of the three components. Table B3 shows all items that have been used. As it is impossible to document all coding rules in this appendix, please refer to the Political Party Database website for a detailed documentation.

Table B3. Composition of AIPD.[a]

IPD component	Decision-making: Programme	Decision-making: Personnel		Organizational structure
IPD variables (PPDB items)	Who has the final vote on the manifesto?	(1a) Are rules for the selection of the party leader existent?		Who is eligible to vote at the party congress?
		(1b) Who has the final vote in the party leader selection process?		How frequently must a party congress be held?
		(1c) Was there a vote at the most inclusive stage of the party leader selection process?	Arithmetic mean of all 'party leader variables'	Who has *ex officio* seats with full voting rights in the party's highest executive body?
		(1d) Who was eligible to participate in this vote (referring to previous question)?		Prerogatives and accountability of the party leader?
		(2) Who has the final vote in the candidate selection process?		
IPD score component	Variable score = component score	Arithmetic mean of (1) 'party leader selection variables' and (2) 'candidate selection variable'		Arithmetic mean of all 'organizational structure variables'
IPD score final	Arithmetic mean of the components 'DM: programme', 'DM: personnel' and 'organizational structure'			

PPDB: Political Party Database; AIPD: assembly-based intra-party democracy; IPD: intra-party democracy.
[a]1b and d partially overlap. We have decided to keep both variables to improve precision.

Plebiscitary IPD. For the calculation of the PIPD index we have two variables tapping into decision-making on manifestoes and policy issues and two variables on personal selection (Table C3). As they are all dichotomous, the final index value is simply the arithmetic mean of all variables available.

Table C3. Composition of PIPD.

IPD component	IPD variables (PPDB items)
Decision-making: *Programme and issues*	Do all party members have a vote on the manifesto?
	Are there intra-party policy ballots in which all party members decide on policy issues?
Decision-making: *Personnel*	Do all party members have a vote in the party leader selection process?
	Do all party members have the final vote in the candidate selection process?
Organizational structure	No items/variables
PIPD score	Arithmetic mean of all variables

PPDB: Political Party Database; PIPD: Plebiscitary IPD-Index; IPD: intra-party democracy.